

## PATENT APPLICATION

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In the Claims:

1. (Currently amended) An isolated polypeptide that induces cell death *in vitro*, consisting of ~~an amino acid sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO: 1, SEQ ID NO: 2, and SEQ ID NO: 8.~~
2. (Previously presented) A composition comprising an isolated polypeptide as of claim 1 and a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier thereof.
3. - 12 (Cancelled)
13. (Withdrawn) An *in vitro* method for screening a compound to determine its utility as a therapeutic agent for treatment of diseases associated with increased cell death, the method comprising:
  - (a) contacting a cell which expresses a protein consisting essentially of ~~at least one amino acid sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO: 1, SEQ ID NO: 2, and SEQ ID NO: 8~~ with the test compound; and
  - (b) determining the level of cell death, wherein a decrease in cell death activity identifies a compound that reduces cell death.
14. - 19. (Cancelled)
20. (Currently amended) An isolated variant of SEQ ID NO. 8 2, wherein the variant is characterized by (1) at least ~~90~~ 95% identity homology to SEQ. ID NO. 8 2, (2) a conserved carboxy end region having an amino acid sequence of amino acid residues 353 to 405 ~~39 to 53~~ of SEQ ID NO. 8 2, (3) conservative changes in any amino acid substitutions and (4) induces cell death *in vitro*.
21. (Withdrawn) A method for inducing cell death *in vitro*, the method comprising contacting the cell with an isolated polypeptide consisting essentially of SEQ ID NO. 8 2 or variants thereof, wherein the variants are characterized by having (1) at least 95 90 % identity homology to SEQ. ID NO. 8 2, (2) a conserved carboxy end region having an amino acid sequence of amino acid residues 353-405 ~~39 to 53~~ of SEQ ID NO. 8 2 and in a sufficient amount to induce cell death.
22. (Cancelled).
23. (Withdrawn) A method of generating an antibody, comprising:

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(a) introducing an isolated polypeptide of claim 20 1 into an immunocompetent animal in an amount sufficient to induce an immune response; and

(b) recovering from serum of the immunocompetent animal antibodies generated in response to the polypeptide of step (a) and that bind therewith.

24. (Withdrawn) An *in vitro* method for screening a compound to determine its utility as a therapeutic agent for treatment of diseases associated with increased cell death, the method comprising:

(a) contacting a cell which expresses a polypeptide of claim 20- 1 with the test compound; and

(b) determining the level of cell death, wherein a decrease in activity identifies a compound that reduces ~~inhibits~~ apoptotic activity.

25. (Currently Cancelled)

26. (Previously presented) An isolated polypeptide that induces cell death *in vitro* comprising SEQ ID NO: 8.

27. (Currently amended) A composition comprising an isolated polypeptide as of claim 26 ~~4~~ and a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier thereof.

28. (Currently amended) An isolated variant of the polypeptide of claim 26, wherein the variant is characterized by (1) at least 95 99 % identity ~~homology~~ to SEQ. ID NO. 8, and (2) conservative changes in amino acid substitutions and (3) induces cell death *in vitro*.

29. (Withdrawn) A method for inducing cell death *in vitro*, the method comprising contacting the cell with an isolated polypeptide according to claim 26 ~~consisting of SEQ ID NO. 8~~ in a sufficient amount to effect an increase in ~~induce~~ cell death.

30. (Withdrawn) A method of generating an antibody, comprising:

(a) introducing an isolated polypeptide of claim 26 into an immunocompetent animal in an amount sufficient to induce an immune response; and

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(b) recovering from serum of the immunocompetent animal antibodies generated in response to the polypeptide of step (a) and that bind therewith.

31. (Withdrawn) An *in vitro* method for screening a test compound to determine its utility as a therapeutic agent for treatment of diseases associated with increased cell death, the method comprising:

(a) contacting a cell which expresses the polypeptide of claim 26 with the test compound; and

(b) determining the level of cell death, wherein a decrease in cell death identifies a compound that does not induce cell death.

32. (Withdrawn) A method for inducing cell death *in vitro*, the method comprising contacting the cell with an isolated polypeptide consisting of SEQ ID NO. 8 in a sufficient amount to induce cell death.

33. (Cancelled)